**Writing Your Own Short Story**

In this double period you are going to be drafting a short story. You should write at least 600 words. Please give the draft in to me on Wednesday 29 May. The story must be authentic and well written. No silly stories please. Read the advice below before you begin.

**Ideas for Topics**

1 – A survival story. In attempting a round the world single handed yacht race you hit a reef and are stranded on a mid-ocean island where there seems to be no sign of life…

2 – A toy is bought that turns out to be more than it appears

3 – You enter the world of a book and have adventures with several characters

4 – Write more of a story from *Things a Map Won’t Show* you, or a missing scene, or what came before the action of a story from the collection, or turn a comic strip or poem in the collection into a story.

5 –Take a dramatic moment from your own life as the inspiration for a fictional story. This could be an accident, long anticipated holiday, party, trip to bowling etc.

6 – A detective story. The mystery of the disappearing muffins. Why have so many muffins gone missing from The Orchard? Who is to blame? Students and staff work together to solve this mystery!

**Plot**

The traditional structure of a story is:

1 – Exposition – characters are introduced and scene is set

2 – Complication – the lives of the characters’ lives become complicated in some way

3 – Climax – suspense is highest and matters are most threatening

4 – Resolution – A solution for the complication is introduced - it may not be a happy one.

You may find your story has many climaxes.

You may choose to use flashbacks as in ‘Only a Game’. You can have a lot of fun with the structure of your story.

Try NOT to make the events of your story silly and unbelievable. Try NOT to have too many events. Too many events leads to a lack of detail – like watching a film that is all in long shot and you can’t see the setting or characters properly – not much fun for the reader. You could try to have a twist to the end of your story – most effective short stories work like this.

**Characters**

Aim to have one and at the most three main characters. More than that and your story will be too crowded and rushed. Remember to show not tell. Use physical description, actions and dialogue to allow the reader to discover the personalities of your characters. Make sure your characters think, act and speak. Many students don’t include dialogue in their stories. Dialogue brings stories alive. Look at examples in the collection to ensure you punctuate correctly.

**Narrative Viewpoint**

Think carefully about what voice you will use. First person? Third person omniscient? Third person with a limited viewpoint? Will you focus on one character’s viewpoint or several. You could try mixing first and third person. It’s up to you. Just be in control.

**Setting**

Make sure your setting is believable. Use precise vocabulary and think of real places. We don’t want a vague fuzzy story. We want a story with places that can be visualised in detail in readers’ minds.

**Balance**

Good stories have a balance of description of setting and action and dialogue. Think about the pace of your story. Is the complication too long and the climax too short? (A common problem for students).

**Style**

Use vivid and interesting words without being forced. Consider the types of sentences you use and the sentence length. Be in control of your style and aware of the effect of your language choices.